

JOHN F. CICILLINE
ATTORNEY AT LAW

Dante State Bank Building • 381 Atwells Avenue • Providence, Rhode Island 02909
Telephone 401-273-5600 • Fax 401-454-5600 • Email jfcicilline387@aol.com

December 6, 2019

Honorable William E. Smith
United States District Court
One Exchange Terrace
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Judge Smith:

As I have grown older I have written more and more letters, which are being ignored. This letter, however, is one I feel conscious bound to write.

A recent news article in the Providence Journal reported that high school students had filed suit in the United States District Court, claiming that the educational system had failed to prepare them to participate in their civic duties. I applaud and support their effort.

I taught, Criminal Law and the Constitution for 10 years at The Community College. I quickly learned that kids who had graduated from high school had no understanding of the three branches of government, had no understanding where the constitution came from and what its purpose was. To tell you that I was shocked would be an understatement.

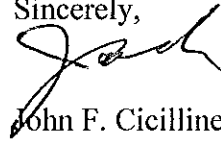
I wondered how kids could vote, decide how to vote on referenda or what they thought their tax dollars were being used for and how those decision were being made, with the poor education they were receiving.

In July of 2017 I wrote to then Commissioner Ken Wagner, voicing my support for a bill pending in the General Assembly, sponsored by Representative Brian C. Newberry, to require the teaching of civics in public schools. Dr. Wagner never responded to my letter, nor did he accept my offer to assist in the matter.

Representative Newberry's bill died and the Department of Education did not even show up for the wake.

I write this letter as a form of an amicus brief, and trust that all parties to the action will come to understand what a vital issue these kids have raised.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John F. Cicilline". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "C".

John F. Cicilline

JFC/al

c/c: Hon. Angelica M. Infante Green
Michael Rebell, Esq.
Her Excellency, Hon. Gina Raimondo